

he wrote about Kelly Barry murdering you."

I told him just a moment, and I looked for the phone number but I couldn't find it.

"that's all right," he said. "by the way, Hank, what did you think of me last night? I was really great, wasn't I?"

"I didn't hear all of it"

"well, I did ... I heard the tape and somewhere on it you said that I appeared to be an asshole ... are you mad at me, Hank?"

"no, everything is all right"

"it's a great tape. I'm going to send it to Germany. I'm going to send it to Carl Weissner in Germany"

"all right, Bernard"

I hung up.

"you should have told him the tape was horrible," said Linda.

"it's strange that he couldn't tell, couldn't he tell?"

"no, all he heard was his own voice"

"well, he helped us when the wheel fell off"

"how long are we going to owe him for that one?"

"literary types are a special breed: they save the best of themselves for the creative act and then sometimes they don't do that very good."

"have you ever come across a writer who wasn't an ass?"

"have you ever come across a left-handed shortstop?"

"what are you going to do about Rifko?"

"I'll have to step on his toes."

"you've done it before but he only withdraws for a little while"

"I'll have to stomp his ankles then"

"how you going to do that?"

"I'll write a poem about him"

"oh, how dreary ...!"

yes, it's dreary. I've got to stop.

HAVE A NICE DAY

there's no mercy,
said the truckdriver.

there's mercy,

said the nun.

there's no chance,

said the hangman.

it's war,

said the service station operator.



I gotta pay for my education,
said the doctor.
our nation is evolving,
said the president.
I can't sleep,
said the general,
I have to get my teeth fixed,
said the dancehall hostess.
I've got 3 years left,
said the cornerback.

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CHILL

I walked out to my car
and there was a note under my
windshield wiper:
"Hey, old man,
give me a call some time.
I'm listed in the phone
book."
and she signed it:
"the light brown stare."
I knew who it was,
the hard large writing was
recognizable without the
signature.
she'd had me on the cross for a
year.
she'd followed one who'd had me
on the cross for five years.
I tore the note up.
the new one came walking up
to the car.
"ready to go, Popsie?" she asked.
"ready to go," I said.
we got in and drove off.
we needed lemons, bread, fish, a
vegetable, olive oil, wine and
toilet paper.
and cat food and maybe onions
too.